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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

DATE: July 2, 2003

TO: School Food Authority (SFA) Administrators and Food Service Managers

FROM: Christine Emerson, Director
School Nutrition Programs

SUBJECT: Pasteurized Juice

This memorandum is to clarify the use of pasteurized juice in the child nutrition programs. While there is no current regulatory requirement, the U. S. Department of Agriculture strongly recommends that only pasteurized juice be used as part of a reimbursable meal/snack in the child nutrition programs. The American Academy of Pediatrics also supports the recommendation to use only pasteurized juice.

The concern about unpasteurized or untreated juice is based on outbreaks of foodborne illnesses caused by pathogenic microorganisms that were present in the unpasteurized products. Children, pregnant women, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems are at particular risk for serious illnesses and/or death caused by these harmful microorganisms. Unpasteurized juice is often referred to as "natural juice."

While most juice is pasteurized, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not require manufacturers to pasteurize their products or use other non-thermal methods, such as ultraviolet light, to control foodborne pathogens. Due to outbreaks of foodborne illnesses caused by unpasteurized or untreated juice, the FDA has required juice products to have warning labels to identify unpasteurized or untreated juice. However, FDA recently enacted a new rule that requires juice products to be processed using the application of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principle to reduce foodborne pathogens. **This rule eliminated the requirement for the warning label on unpasteurized juice processed with the HACCP principles.**

It may be difficult for an SFA to determine a juice processor's compliance with the HACCP principles. Therefore, use of pasteurized juice to ensure a safe product is recommended. This policy is consistent with the current *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs, Revised November 2001, pages 2-43*, that recommend using only pasteurized juice.

If you have questions, please call Holly Humphrey, School Nutrition Programs Specialist, (406) 444-4413.